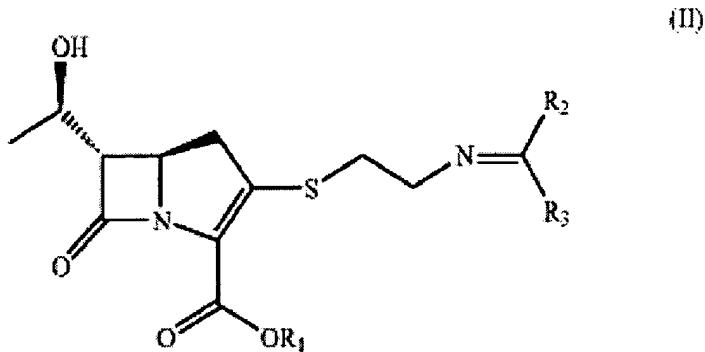


**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

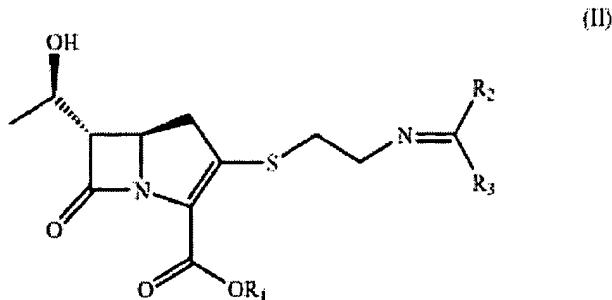
1. (Currently amended) A compound of Formula II below:



wherein

R<sub>1</sub> is a p-nitrobenzyl or p-methoxybenzyl group; and R<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>3</sub> may be identical to or different from each other and are each independently a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl or aryl group, or a derivative thereof.

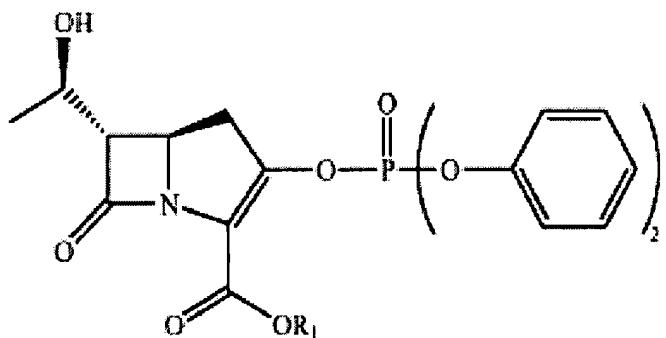
2. (Currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of Formula II below:



wherein

$R_1$  is a p-nitrobenzyl or p-methoxybenzyl group; and  $R_2$  and  $R_3$  may be identical to or different from each other and are each independently a  $C_{1-6}$  alkyl or aryl group, by coupling a compound of Formula IV below:

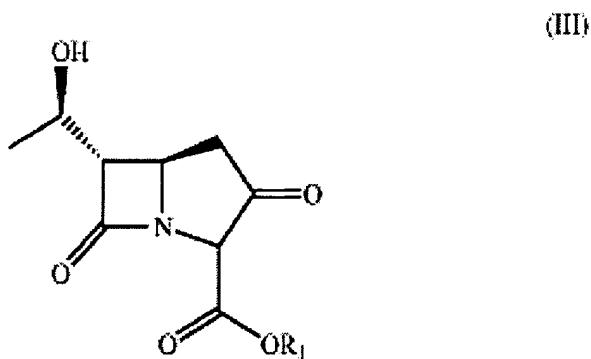
(IV)



wherein  $R_1$  is a p-nitrobenzyl or p-methoxybenzyl group, ~~or a derivative thereof~~, with 2-aminoethanethiol hydrochloride in the presence of a base, followed by reaction with a ketone.

3. (Original) The process according to claim 2, wherein the ketone is selected from the group consisting of acetone, methylethylketone, diphenylketone, and mixtures thereof.

4. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the compound of Formula IV ~~or a derivative thereof~~ is obtained by condensing a compound of Formula III below:



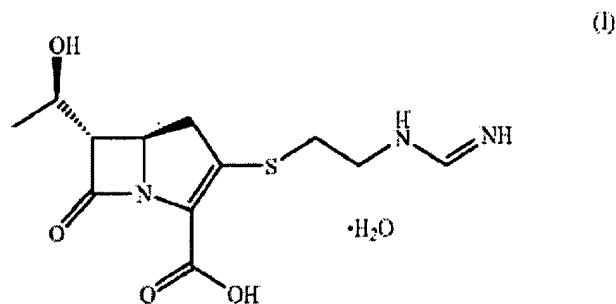
wherein

$R_1$  is a p-nitrobenzyl or p-methoxybenzyl group, with diphenylchlorophosphate in the presence of a base.

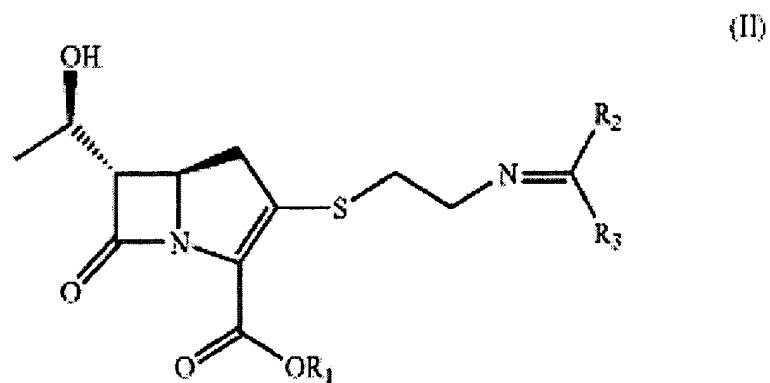
5. (Original) The process according to claim 4, wherein the reaction solvent is a mixed solvent of acetonitrile and tetrahydrofuran.

6. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 4, wherein the ~~reaction condensation is carried out at a temperature~~ ~~[[is]]~~ within the range of 0°C to -10°C.

7. (Original) A process for preparing the compound of Formula I below:

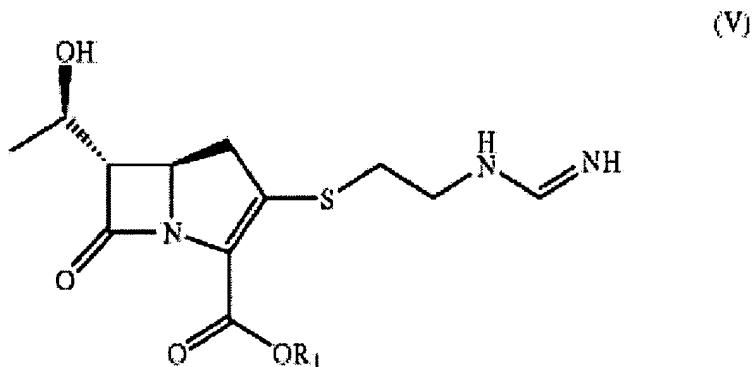


by reacting a compound of formula II below:



wherein

R<sub>1</sub> is a p-nitrobenzyl or p-methoxybenzyl group; and R<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>3</sub> may be identical to or different from each other and are each independently a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl or aryl group, with isopropylformimidate or benzylformimidate in the presence of a base to obtain a compound of Formula V below:



wherein

R<sub>1</sub> is a p-nitrobenzyl or p-methoxybenzyl group, hydrogenating the compound of Formula V in the presence of a metal catalyst, separating the hydrogenated compound, and crystallizing the separated compound in the presence of an alcohol or ketone.

8. (Original) The process according to claim 7, wherein the hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of a palladium catalyst containing an excess of water under a hydrogen pressure of 4~6 kg/cm<sup>2</sup>.

9. (Original) The process according to claim 7, wherein the reaction solvent is a mixed solvent of water and tetrahydrofuran.